

Doctrine of the Levites

1. The Levites are descendants of Levi, a son of Jacob.
 - *Exodus 1:1 Now these are the names of the children of Israel, which came into Egypt; every man and his household came with Jacob. 2 Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah,*

2. The Levites who were not directly descendants from Aaron, were chosen by God to serve as assistants to the priests in worship and holy work including menial tasks.
 - *Numbers 8:6 Take the Levites from among the children of Israel, and cleanse them. 7 And thus shalt thou do unto them, to cleanse them: Sprinkle water of purifying upon them, and let them shave all their flesh, and let them wash their clothes, and so make themselves clean. 8 Then let them take a young bullock with his meat offering, even fine flour mingled with oil, and another young bullock shalt thou take for a sin offering.*

3. The reason why the Levites were chosen as priests was because they repented of their sin and showed zeal for the Lord's honor when others continued in idolatry around the golden calf.
 - *Exodus 32:26 Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. 27 And he said unto them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour. 28 And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men.*

4. The Levites were not allowed to inherit the land.
 - *Numbers 8:14 Thus shalt thou separate the Levites from among the children of Israel: and the Levites shall be mine. 15 And after that shall the Levites go in to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation: and thou shalt cleanse them, and offer them for an offering. 16 For they are wholly given unto me from among the children of Israel; instead of such as open every womb, even instead of the firstborn of all the children of Israel, have I taken them unto me. 17 For all the firstborn of the children of Israel are mine, both man and beast: on the day that I smote every firstborn in the land of Egypt I sanctified them for myself. 18 And I have taken the Levites for all the firstborn of the children of Israel. 19 And I have given the Levites as a gift to Aaron and to his sons from among the children of Israel, to do the service of the children of Israel in the tabernacle of the congregation, and to make an atonement for the children of Israel: that there be no plague among the children of Israel, when the children of Israel come nigh unto the sanctuary.*

5. The firstborn of every tribe of the nation of Israel who were consecrated to the Lord were replaced by the Levites who became their substitutes.
6. The first born of every tribe was ransomed by five shekels.
 - *Numbers 18:16 And those that are to be redeemed from a month old shalt thou redeem, according to thine estimation, for the money of five shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, which is twenty gerahs.*
7. The period of service for a Levite was from age 25 to 50.
 - *Numbers 8:24 This is it that belongeth unto the Levites: from twenty and five years old and upward they shall go in to wait upon the service of the tabernacle of the congregation: 25 And from the age of fifty years they shall cease waiting upon the service thereof, and shall serve no more:*
8. There were four functions of the Levitical priesthood.
 - The Levites were to preserve the Law and transmit it to posterity. The Law was written on stone

Leviticus 10:11 And that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the Lord hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses. (Study Deuteronomy 17:18; 31:9; 33:10; Ezekiel 44:23).
 - The Levites were to assist the priests in the service of the Tabernacle and later the Temple.

Numbers 18:4 And they shall be joined unto thee, and keep the charge of the tabernacle of the congregation, for all the service of the tabernacle: and a stranger shall not come nigh unto you.
 - The Levites did all that was needed for worship but they did not do two things.

They did not do the work of the Gibeonites. They were to be hewers of wood and drawers of water. *Joshua 9:21 And the princes said unto them, Let them live; but let them be hewers of wood and drawers of water unto all the congregation; as the princes had promised them.*

They did not do the work of the gatekeepers.

9. Apart from the family of Aaron, there were three general families from the loins of Levi. *Genesis 46:11 And the sons of Levi; Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.*
- The family of Gershonites was responsible for the hangings of the Tabernacle including the door.
 - The family of Kohath was responsible for the Ark of the Covenant, the showbread, the lampstand, the altar of incense, the altar of burnt offerings, and all the sacred vessels within the Tabernacle.
 - The family of Merari was responsible for the planks, the bars, the pillars of silver, the sockets, the pins, and the cords in the Tabernacle.
10. The Levites were also responsible for the transportation of the Tabernacle.